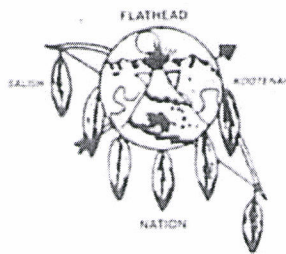
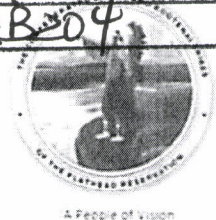


Exhibit No. 17Date: 3/5/15Bill No. HB 204

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION

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A Confederation of the Salish,
Pend d' Oreille
and Kootenai Tribes

(S) Judiciary Committee
Honorable Scott Sales, Chairman
Honorable Jennifer Fielder, Vice Chair
64th Montana Legislature
Capital Building - Helena, Mt.

March 6, 2015

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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RE: HB 204 – revising laws relating liability waivers and releases

Chairman Sales and Committee Members:

The introduction of HB 204 is very much needed in the State of Montana. In our beautiful state, there are many landowners that provide free use of their property for recreation and sporting activities. HB 204 ensures that these community events continue on in the future.

The CSKT offers multiple public benefits for the reservation community. We support local sporting events for all, as we understand that recreation and sporting activities improve the health and wellness of adults, young adults, and children in our community. A few examples of tribal properties that the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes ("CSKT") makes available for sporting and recreation activities include six different baseball and softball fields. Uses of these properties are permitted under a free use permit. These fields are in the communities of Arlee, Charlo, Ronan and St. Ignatius. All of these properties are permitted for public use, but we do require liability insurance of the event sponsors.

The requirement for liability insurance is a reasonable request as a landowner, but can be challenging for event sponsors to obtain. The CSKT would much rather have liability waivers, which are accepted by both the landowner and the event sponsor. In this manner, both entities are protected while continuing to offer public use of Tribal property.

This bill and the adoption of a liability waiver would alleviate the landowner and the event sponsor from acquiring costly liability insurance. Local funds dedicated to insurance can then be re-dedicated to field improvement or increasing the number of teams and individuals that can play at the local level.

The CSKT stands in support of HB 204 as it meets a need in many small communities. This bill sustains affordable sports and recreational opportunities in the State of Montana. We wish to thank all of the bill sponsors and Greg Hertz for introducing commonsense legislation that benefits many. Please vote yes on HB 204.

Respectfully submitted,

Vernon S. Finley, Chairman
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes